Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend Claims 1, 5, 10, 13, and 18 as indicated in the following listing of claims, which replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a plurality of transaction cards, the method comprising:

assigning a reference number to each of the transaction cards;

fabricating the each of the transaction cards in accordance with a specification; ~~and~~

thereafter, comparing the reference number assigned to the each of the transaction cards with a database of previously assigned reference numbers; and ~~to identify any duplication of~~

rejecting the each of the transaction cards if the reference number duplicates any of the previously assigned reference numbers.

2. (Original) The method recited in claim 1 wherein the plurality of transaction cards comprises a stored-value card.

3. (Original) The method recited in claim 1 wherein comparing the reference number assigned to each of the transaction cards is performed for a bundle having a predetermined number of transaction cards.

4. (Original) The method recited in claim 3 further comprising removing the bundle from a process flow in response to identification that the reference number for at least one of the transaction cards comprised by the bundle is a duplicate of one of the previously assigned reference numbers.

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5. (Currently Amended) The method recited in claim [[1]] 4 further comprising preventing the bundle from progressing to a subsequent stage in the process flow until a preceding stage in the the process flow is completed.

6. (Original) The method recited in claim 1 wherein fabricating each of the transaction cards further comprising recording an identity of an operator.

7. (Original) The method recited in claim 1 wherein comparing the reference number assigned to each of the transaction cards comprises recording an identity of an operator.

8. (Original) The method recited in claim 1 further comprising performing an audit for at least one of the transaction cards to identify a first operator responsible for at least a portion of the fabricating step and a second operator responsible for at least a portion of the comparing step.

9. (Original) The method recited in claim 1 wherein the database includes records for previously assigned reference numbers for a plurality of different card issuers.

10. (Currently Amended) A system for producing transaction cards, the system comprising:

a plurality of stations, each such station having mechanism for implementing a production function;

an operator interface to permit an operator to monitor a status of the stations;

a controller for controlling the stations and the operator interface; and

a memory coupled to the controller comprising a computer-readable medium having a computer-readable program embodied therein for directing operation of the system, the computer-readable program including:

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instructions for assigning a reference number to <u>each of</u> the transaction cards;

instructions for fabricating the <u>each of the</u> transaction cards at the plurality of stations in accordance with the production function; ~~and~~

instructions for subsequently comparing the reference number assigned to <u>the</u> each of the transaction cards with a database of previously assigned reference numbers<u>; and</u> ~~to identify any duplication of~~

<u>instructions for rejecting the each of the transaction cards if the reference number duplicates any of the previously assigned</u> reference numbers.

11. (Original) The system recited in claim 10 wherein at least one of the transaction cards comprises a stored-value card.

12. (Original) The system recited in claim 10 wherein at least one of the stations includes a device selected from the group consisting of an inkjet printer, an embosser, and a thermal printer.

13. (Currently Amended) The system recited in claim 10 further comprising an input device ~~adapted to~~ <u>for</u> read<u>ing</u> an identity of the operator from an identification instrument.

14. (Original) The system recited in claim 13 wherein the input device comprises a bar-code reader and the identification instrument includes a bar code that identifies the operator.

15. (Original) The system recited in claim 13 wherein the computer-readable program further includes instructions for recording the identity of the operator.

16. (Original) The system recited in claim 10 wherein the computer-readable program further includes instructions for performing an audit for at least one of the transaction

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cards to identify all operators responsible for production of the at least one of the transaction cards.

17. (Original) The system recited in claim 10 wherein the database includes records for previously assigned reference numbers for a plurality of different card issuers.

18. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium having a computer-readable program embodied therein for directing operation of a system for producing transaction cards including a plurality of stations each having a mechanism for implementing a production function and an operator interface to permit an operator to monitor a status of the stations, the computer-readable program including instructions for operating the system in accordance with the following:

assigning a reference number to each of a plurality of transaction cards;

fabricating the each of the plurality of transaction cards in accordance with a specification; ~~and~~

thereafter, comparing the reference number associated to the each of the plurality of transaction cards with a database of previously assigned reference numbers; and ~~to identify any duplication of~~

rejecting the each of the transaction cards if the reference number duplicates any of the previously assigned reference numbers.

19. (Original) The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 18 wherein the computer-readable program further includes instructions for recording an identity of the operator.

20. (Original) The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 18 wherein the computer-readable program further includes instructions for performing an audit for at least one of the plurality of transaction cards to identify all operators responsible for production of the at least one the transaction cards.